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Have We Any Spiritual Capital for Export?

AN American professor who spent last summer in relief work on the Continent of Europe under the American Friends' Service Committee, has received since his return a letter from a German medical student in Cologne that has searched the minds and consciences of those Americans, and especially of those students, with whom it has been shared. Here are its relevant sentences:

"Our eyes know that life is worthy to be lived. Why? Because we hope to see better times? No! The future for all the boys and girls belonging to this new movement is as black as for the others. But we put ourselves upon the only ground that is laid: Christ. The aims of this youth are not at all political ones; our care is the revival of religion. We begin with the inner life that will of course then have its efficacy upon the outward situation, for we are looking for the connection between religion and life.

This is our very task. Knowing this task, we are able to go forward in rebuilding our country and renovating our souls and minds. And what may you do for us in furthering this process? You may give us hope. For that is the thing we cannot give ourselves.

You see; youth can suffer, youth can endure, youth can stand all pains, youth can be deprived of all material goods and yet be happy, if youth is not hopeless! We shan't be hopeless with your help."

This letter raises some searching questions about our own spiritual economy. If the need overseas were simply for machinery or raw materials, for coal or capital or credit, we have enough of these to export them in large quantities: economically we are a producer and a creditor nation. If it were only food that hungry Europe needs, we have enough of that to spare a good deal—if we had the heart to do so. But have we any hope and faith for export? In this time of apprehension and pessimism, here as well as over there, have we any hope and faith to spare? Current quotations in the conversational market do not seem to indicate that we have any large surplus of free spiritual capital available for investment where it is needed most.

Under the portrait of President Harper in the

Memorial Library that bears his name at the University of Chicago, is an inscription selected from Paul's Letter to the Romans (15:4) by Dr. Ernest D. Burton when he was Librarian:

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning. . . ." But even these two well-known Biblical scholars could hardly have foreseen the striking relevance to our present situation of the final phrase in Paul's complete sentence:

"Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that through patience and through comfort of the scriptures we might have hope."

As if to suggest, with two Jewish captivities and with Calvary above all for historical evidence, that in all dark times a major "comfort of the scriptures" is their assurance that if we too have patience to endure and to plant the right seed, we also may have hope that out of what looks for the moment like tragic evil, God can once more at long last bring forth a final harvest of good.

Even that scriptural assurance is however not Paul's final word in these matters. His last word is a prayer:

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, in the power of the Holy Spirit." (Rom. 15:13) The God Who speaks to us through Biblical history and witness, speaks to us also directly through our own experience as well; and by His quickening presence within us, reawakens and sustains hope and faith within our own hearts. The result becomes what our contemporary lingo would call a spiritual economy of abundance.

There are two distinctive marks of such religious hope, which distinguish it from the hopefulness that is characteristic of youth, or of an optimistic temperament. One mark is that religious hope does not depend upon, and refuses to be judged by, the outcome of the event or the situation. Failure or sorrow cannot by themselves discount it, any more than success or happiness can confirm it. More important than any outcome is the wisdom and the purpose of God, on which we build our hope, re-

gardless of the event. In that will is not only our peace, as Dante said—but our hope.

The other mark of religious hope is that it lives and moves on a two-way street. Like international trade, spiritual fellowship has to travel both ways—else it speedily ceases to move at all. While some American liberals were questioning whether Martin Niemöller had taken his final anti-Nazi position soon enough or sharply enough, thousands of American Christians were being stirred by his straightforward confession of a shared sense of guilt and repentance and forgiveness through Christ, to an awakened conviction of their own need, and of our American churches' need, of repentance and forgiveness—and thus to a deepened sense of ecumenical Christian fellowship. Those who have worked in the post-war youth camps of the Low Countries tell us that the gulfs between racial and religious groups are there so deep and wide, that the "mutual understanding" in which we Americans put so much social faith is not there enough: only where there is some religious sense of forgiveness and of being forgiven, does any bridge toward better human relations become possible. Our hope in God becomes then our firmest basis for hope in man—and in our human future.

C. W. G.

Editorial Notes

Americans who have long had a sense of solidarity with the British people because of their costly struggle against the Axis, have a helpless and frustrated feeling as they stand by and watch the deepening of British privations now. We hope that there will not develop in this country the tendency to say, that this serves the British right because they are experimenting with Socialism, for that would be sheer foolishness whatever one may think of the merits of British Socialism. The present predicament of the British nation is the result of an accumulation of difficulties mostly related to the use of resources and the wearing out of equipment during the war. Most readers of this journal will associate themselves with the words of Mr. Thomas W. Lamont that accompanied his generous gift for the restoration of Canterbury Cathedral: "We Americans, of all others, can never forget that in the darkest days of 1940 and 1941, it was only British courage and the blind faith of free men, undismayed by disaster, that saved the world from the evil of the Teutonic onslaught." And now the British, more than any other people, are sensitive to the sufferings of those same "Teutons," and their government, after great pressure from the people, have given permission for them to send out of their rations food packages to the Ger-

mans. Over forty thousand in Britain have sent such packages already, and there is a campaign in progress led by Victor Gollancz to arouse the conscience of Britain concerning hunger in Germany. This campaign has no parallel in America because its leader comes from the political left. In this country the left has been quite callous about Germany.

The effort of several senators to block the appointment of Lilienthal as chairman of the Commission on Atomic Energy shows how even the problem of atomic control can be exploited for political ends or, in the case of Senator McKellar, can be subordinated to personal spite. When the announcement of the Lilienthal appointment was made it met with approval on all sides and especially from those who seemed to know most about the problem. There was general confidence that this fateful responsibility would be in safe hands. Now a minority of the Senate, by the insinuation that Lilienthal is sympathetic with Communism and that, because he was foreign born, he is not to be trusted, is seeking to deprive the nation of one of its most competent and most admired public servants. This is another one of the cases, of which we have had too many, where there is a deliberate effort to smear a liberal by associating him with Communism, without any basis for doing so. Whether the major drive behind this attack upon Lilienthal is to prevent effective civilian control of atomic power, or to save atomic power for exploitation by private enterprise, remains to be seen. Either of these purposes would prevent the control of this new power in the interests of the people.

The willingness of the Moscow Patriarch to receive the American branch of the Russian Orthodox Church into communion again, and at the same time to grant it administrative autonomy, is a hopeful sign. It is one of many indications of the desire of Russia to cooperate with the rest of the world, however hard a bargainer she may prove to be. It also, and more clearly, suggests that the Russian Church may be willing to join the World Council of Churches, for one of the chief problems in that connection has been the relationship between the World Council, or its member Churches, and various branches of the Russian Church in exile which have been opposed to the Moscow Patriarchate. It is to be hoped that the Russian Church will come into the World Council of Churches, because that would increase enormously the area of ecumenical fellowship, and it would help to build a spiritual bridge between Russia and the West.

John C. Bennett.

People Displaced

CYNTHIA NASH

SOME time before the armed conflict of the War of Liberation ended, a good deal of thought and planning was devoted to the problems connected with groups of non-Germans who would be, upon the fall of Germany, within the borders of the Reich and who would require care and repatriation to their own homelands. At an early point in this planning, the powers that be decreed that these persons of civilian status should be referred to not as "refugees," but as "displaced persons," shortened after the custom of our century to "D.P.". A quantity of written material was produced concerning these terms, these groups of people, and the varying psychologies involved; some small part of this literature, largely intra-mural within the Army, UNRRA, and private relief agencies, was sound and informative; the greater part was wordy and involved the multiple restatement of facts and generalizations apparent to anyone who had observed the small daily society in which he himself was living.

The idea of displacement is nothing new, for example to the teacher or psychiatrist dealing with a child from a broken home, albeit that displacement on an international scale becomes entangled with nationality status, national pride, and national aims. At bottom it coincides with the problem of security which we are facing today and looked at broadly it presents one phase of the question of a stable society with which we are attempting to deal. From the psychologist's viewpoint, Germany today would make a superb laboratory for the production of new theories and tests, the sum total of which might be the not very astounding conclusion that to remove human beings from their homes and, in the majority of instances, their families often results in the destruction of accepted social standards, an increase in social immorality, and a general decrease in initiative and the recognition of a purpose in existence.

The unnerving factor in the German situation today seems to me that such a large percentage of the population in the British and American Zones has, in one form or another, undergone such displacement. There are always groups and individuals in any society suffering from this ailment—the Dust Bowl farmers of our own country, the victims of economic instability at any time. The numbers of such people in Germany just now are unusually high. The reasons for their geographical and environmental displacement are varied, but they are all suffering from the same disease.

The only communities which are openly called "displaced" are the several hundred thousand Jews, Poles, Balts, and Ukrainians, who were induced by

force or other means to enter Germany during the war to provide additional labor for the German war effort. Considerable pressure, most of it unskillfully applied, has been brought to bear upon these groups that they might return to their own homes. A few may, even in the future, do so, but there is little doubt that a great many will remain. Of this remnant, some have been, are now being, and will be declared ineligible, by reason of their past activities, for assistance as displaced persons. They will, presumably, become part of the German community and will, to a large extent, lose the psychology of the D.P. The groups who have a genuine claim to persecution, such as the Jews, or who refuse to accept the changes brought about in their former homelands, such as the Poles and Balts, will retain the characteristics of the displaced person until they are given the opportunity to become part of a larger group with another status.

These national groups differ among themselves. The standard comment of the relief workers is that the Balts are industrious and cooperative, the Poles lazy and truculent, and the Jews and Ukrainians more difficult to work with than either of the others. The truth of the matter goes far deeper, in that all these people are living in an artificial pattern, and that each of them, allowing for the differences in his education and previous mode of life, is reacting as would be expected. The astonishing thing about the whole tragic situation is the number among them who retain poise, integrity, and the desire to live constructively. They live, for the most part, in buildings which were once military barracks or labor camps. They are an excrescence and a parasite, existing as they do within German society yet not a part of it. In the months immediately following the entrance of the Allied armies, they were wined and dined and urged to sit in the sun; now, a year and a half later, the term "D.P." is used by most of the military with the same inflection that "Auslander" has always been spoken by the German. They get no more to eat than the German population, and they are requested, with a hint of threat, to go out and work, often under German supervision. It is not to be wondered at, it seems to me, that the rate of demoralization is high, but rather that it, and the suicide rate, are not higher.

We in America are worried about the reorientation which our young men and women must accomplish in this difficult post-war period and attach small blame to those who cannot make the change. How much more respect then we should have for people like the young Estonian widow whose hus-

band, impressed into the German army, fell on the Russian front, who saw her fifteen-year-old brother taken from home by the Soviet authorities, who dares not write to her relatives still in Estonia, who sees her father and mother, educated, intelligent school-teachers, eking out a wretched existence in a sordid environment, and who yet concerns herself strenuously with the welfare of her camp and its people. How much indulgence can we spare some of our young parents if we are prepared to criticize the Polish parents struggling to raise their three children with dignity, honesty, and grace in a community whose potentialities for crime and immorality are far greater than any city slum?

One of the greatest handicaps under which this group of displaced persons suffers is the tendency of those who work with them and talk and write about them to think of them in the mass. They think of themselves in terms of their total lives, remembering the house which was once owned, the street or village where once they were individuals, and they regard this abortive camp existence as a phase which will pass, since few human beings are prepared to think of themselves permanently as one of a homogeneous crowd. The longer these people live this standardized existence, the longer it remains impossible for them to pursue their normal occupations, the more difficult it becomes for the relief worker, for the military, and for the outside world, when it gives the matter any thought, to retain any but a generalized impression of the whole. And naturally, as time passes under such conditions, the individuality does become in fact repressed, apathetic, indifferent, and sees itself only as part of a pattern repeated over and over again.

During the last months of my work in Germany, I helped with the establishment and operation of a center to provide training for D.P.'s along welfare lines. Our original intention was to supply aides for the over-burdened welfare workers in the camps, but the courses developed into a combination welfare training-political discussion-personality booster period. We could do comparatively little along any of these lines, for we were short of time and materials, but the groups were small and our interest in them genuine, and we succeeded in one thing at least, in letting our "students" realize that we were concerned about them personally. The reaction was one of friendliness and gratitude; over and over again, members of the courses would say to us upon their departure, "This is the first time in three (or four or five or six) years that I have been treated like a human being." This type of action on the part of the relief worker is a palliative, however, and not a cure. There is, disguise it as one will, nothing that can solve the problem of these people outside of repatriation, absorption into the German community, or emigration. To date, the Western Allies

have refused, and I think rightly, to sanction compulsory repatriation, and the new regimes in the East are by no means eager for the return of some of these people. The Germans do not want to add these groups to an already over-strained economy, nor, for the most part, have the D.P.'s themselves any desire to become citizens of the nation which is most directly responsible for their present position. The remaining possibility, that of emigration, is that which naturally appeals to the greatest number of the displaced. It will be, I expect, a shock to some Americans and a relief to many to know that the United States is no longer the Mecca of the refugee, at least as I knew these latest in an age-old line. The British Dominions and the strong South American nations, such as Brazil, occupy an equal, if not a dominating position in the minds of those who feel they must begin life anew and who have gathered by some telepathy across three thousand miles of land and water that the bulk of the American people is averse to a further influx of foreign nationals.

The difficulties of removing these groups to other healthier climates are naturally tremendous. Nevertheless, it is a job which can and must be done, not only for its worth as human salvage, but also because, while these people remain as they are, they constitute a drain on the sorely taxed resources of Germany, a problem which cannot be correlated with any other faced by the occupying powers, and an unhealed wound, a danger spot, in the center of Europe. The nations, quest for peace, and the cry goes up that the problems are so complex that the answers are beyond our grasp or even comprehension. Here, it seems to me, is one which, by comparison with others, is simple in its scope and obvious in its solution. I should add that the Jewish group must be partially excepted from this simplicity of outline, involved as it is with the Palestine question and suffering as it does from a very special set of pressures.

In the other two sections of Germany's population afflicted by the malady of displacement, in a less clear-cut way, are large numbers of the Germans themselves and the occupational forces. They have less to endure for obvious reasons: the civilians are, though often far from their former homes, still in their own land among fellow-countrymen; and the military have a favored station in the community and no problems where the maintenance of daily life is concerned.

Nevertheless, there are today several millions of Germans, formerly resident in Czechoslovakia or the border-country between Poland and the Reich, who feel themselves strangers in their own country. The native population of western Germany tends to regard them also in the mass, "Flüchtlinge" as opposed to themselves, and in the small villages through

which they have been scattered, they are not always welcome. The housing shortage has created neighbors who would previously have lived very different kinds of lives. If one can picture a combination of the crisis in American war-industries centers and the problems created by the evacuation of Britain's large cities during the war and add to it the fact that literally not one important town in western Germany remains intact—one can begin to visualize the upheaval which is still shaking Germany today. Schools are overcrowded, churches serve double congregations. Many of the older people, those who were already middle-aged at the time of Hitler's installation, shake their heads over the behavior of the youth; they and officials of military government make efforts to counteract the effects of mass migration added to war. Oddly enough, the difficulties of maintaining daily life, incomprehensible to anyone who has not seen some part of the aftermath in Europe, seem to act in a negative way as an allaying factor to a violent break in morale. It is simply a question of time. When the procurement or the earning of the sheer necessities of existence takes most of one's waking hours, and when the margin is so slim that one must conserve all energy for these two tasks, there is little opportunity left for active viciousness. The more universal symptoms are the same dearth of vitality and initiative which one can observe among the D.P. population proper.

The effects of this domestic reshuffling are, at the moment, far less clear than those which have declared themselves among foreign groups in Germany and are probably more far-reaching. It seems safe to say that there is no other continental country today which contains so many citizens on home soil who are, to put it crudely, homesick. The people who have undergone this displacement express their feelings by speaking of the material things they have lost; but the seventeen-year-old secretary who shows you photographs of her home in Czechoslovakia, the musician struggling to create a new order in his musical world, the cleaning woman who hates Hannover and longs for the Silesian countryside—these people are experiencing more than the mere aftermath of war. They are part of an uprooting which may have significant results in German politics and German life.

Compared with the less easily definable insecurities of this section of the civilian population, the malaise which has attacked the occupying forces of England and more especially of America is diagnostically a simple problem. The reaction seems to be in direct relation to the distance from home; that is to say that I sensed far less irritability and dissatisfaction among British troops than among American, and the general morale, since one does unquestionably build up an impression of such things, however

unjust, seemed better to me in the British Zone. The fact that England is three days distant from Germany by mail and thirty-six hours by train and boat has unquestionably much to do with the greater serenity and less open misbehavior of British troops. It is also well to remember that Britain has behind her a century-old experience of occupation upon which to draw, and the results show up in the greater adaptability of the English soldier. It is amusing to observe that the world-wide reputation of the English for creating a home away from home boils down in Germany to the feasibility of producing cups of tea at all hours of the day and night; whereas the Americans, equally famed for their curiosity and enthusiasm for the new and unknown, require the erection of a cafeteria before they begin to feel at ease. The most courteous, friendly, and cheerful American troops I encountered in Germany were those in the isolated community in Berlin, where every effort has been made to reproduce the atmosphere of a comfortable American suburb.

That many Americans suffer also from a sense of guilt when they compare their comfort and security with the position of both D.P.'s and Germans is indisputable. But since the ordinary G.-I. cannot, and is not expected to, do anything about this difference, he reacts like most of us when faced with an unfamiliar and unpleasant situation: he withdraws into his own world, in this case that of the P-X and the Red Cross Club, and curses the United States Government for not sending him home. His excursions into the world beyond these limits are confined to his dealings on the black market and his search for feminine society. It would seem wise to accept and act upon the proposition recently advanced, that only a minimum occupational force should be maintained in Germany by the United States and that government should be in the hands of civilians with, one hopes, experience in administration and a genuine interest in the German community.

Though the disparities in living standards are tremendous, our soldiers in Germany are a group presenting uncomfortable parallels to the genuine D.P. Both have been removed, by force of circumstance, from their native lands to a foreign country whose language is not theirs; both are assured of shelter and food for which their labor is minimum; both are living outside the main current of German life; and both long for their return to a place which they can call home and the day when they can recommence their ordinary lives. For most of the troops, like most of the D.P.'s, removal from Germany is the only permanent solution to their restlessness there; and, again alike, they must be ministered unto and helped over the worst hurdles by their priests and chaplains, by social workers, educational programs, and entertainment. The difference lies in the fact that a good many Americans will have to remain in

Germany for years to come, whereas no such necessity exists for the D.P.'s.

The resolution of Germany's new population problem is inextricably bound up with the slow rearrangement and rebuilding of her economic and social life; the problem of the D.P. and the American-in-occupation can be tackled quite apart from the question of Germany's future—the first by the generosity and common sense of the United Nations, the second by America's recognition of the fact that occupation, even at the lower levels, is a job for people with a one-world outlook and mature judgment, not for nineteen-year-olds who are lost without the corner drugstore.

Editorial Correspondence

Scotland.

The most vivid impression of an American traveler in Europe today is of the marked contrast between American abundance and European poverty. The living standards of Britain are of course immeasurably higher than those of the continent; yet they are so much lower than our American standards that one begins to understand why Britain is more concerned than we about the continent. It is not only closer to the continent but also shares the general European poverty. One realizes that America's spiritual remoteness from the affairs of Europe is due not merely to geography and distance, but to the fact that American opulence makes it difficult for us to understand the fate of the peoples of Europe upon whom our power impinges. At the moment Britain is in the grip of a coal shortage which accentuates the contrast between the warm American home and the austere British home.

Any sense of American technical superiority over Britain must quickly give way to a sense of our moral inferiority in the deeper issues of life. This is a highly disciplined nation which takes a rightful pride in the fact that the limited supplies of the nation are equitably distributed and that no one therefore eats his bread at the expense of another. In comparison our mad scramble to remove all controls and our consequent inflation seem pathetic indeed. It is in fact so regarded by the British who do not envy us. They think of us rather as a profligate adolescent who may not come to a good end.

It is noticeable that others beside Labor party radicals view the dominance of American power in the world community with some apprehension. The fear that we might become isolationist again has gradually abated. But there is no certainty that we understand the needs of Europe and there is almost complete certainty that we will run from a "boom"

to a "bust" period in our economy and that we may drag Europe down with us in such a catastrophe. A certain unconscious envy may prompt some of these fears; but there is some warrant for them even if the envy be discounted. In general an American is struck by the fact that the position of a Dives in a world inhabited by innumerable Lazars is not an enviable one.

To turn to matters of religious life, it may be worth reporting that the services of the Church of Scotland probably offer our American church life a better example in the art of worship than we could secure anywhere else. The majority of American churches are non-liturgical. While they may and do learn increasingly from liturgical churches about the art of worship they are not likely ever to become purely liturgical. On the other hand they must arrive at a richer and more meaningful worship than is offered in the average pastoral prayer of the American church. The Church of Scotland, since the reunion between the established and the free church, has blended the liturgical tradition of the former with the free tradition of the latter. The blend is a very good one from which we could learn. The prayers are completely free of the slipshod and banal sentimentalities which disfigure so many American public prayers. They are rich in Biblical content and not without aesthetic form and beauty.

I have just come from the meeting of the Glasgow Presbytery where the moderator's opening worship service gave one a genuine sense of being transported into a community of grace, which lived in the presence of God and which had a sense of fellowship with every similar community in all places and of all times.

R. N.

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The World Church: News and Notes

Study Conference on the Bible

Further reports from Geneva indicate that the study conference on "The Authority and Significance of the Social and Political Message of the Bible Today" was a complete success. The conference was held in January at the Ecumenical Institute at Bossey, near Geneva.

The conference was a success in the sense that a definite step towards better mutual understanding and greater Christian unity has been ventured. Participants in the conference were agreed that the questions with which the Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Amsterdam will have to deal in 1948 can only be solved on a Biblical basis.

The Bossey meeting must be considered as one of a series of study conferences organized by the Study Department of the World Council of Churches in preparation for the Assembly in 1948. During the summer of 1946 a conference on the same subject was held in London, and in America special study groups are dealing with the subject in the light of their particular situation. At Bossey the strongest delegations came from the Reformed and Lutheran churches of Europe. It is good to report that this meeting did not terminate in the same way as the famous conversation between Luther and Zwingli at Marburg. The Conference showed clearly that for a long time the confessions have not been close-cut entities but that theological differences cut right across all the previous lines of division.

Members of the Conference were agreed that the burning questions of the present day must be solved in the light of the Bible message, i.e., in the message of Jesus Christ. They were also agreed that it is impossible to apply the Biblicist method—the method of bringing separate Biblical commandments to bear directly on the present situation, without consideration of their fundamental implications. But neither did they wish to confine themselves merely to proclaiming a basically Christian way of thinking, in the liberal, modernist fashion. Christ's lordship over the world must be preached to this world. It was on the question as to how this was to be done that opinions were divided.

The Study Department of the World Council of Churches will bring out a detailed report on the Conference as soon as possible.—E.P.S. Geneva

The Axioms of Modern Man

In connection with the preparatory study for the first Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1948, Dr. Emil Brunner has compiled a list of axioms by which modern man lives. These are axioms which, although unconsciously held, underlie the life of modern man; they frequently find expression in popular sayings and mottoes. Here is Dr. Brunner's list:

1. Everything is relative; there is no absolute truth.
2. What cannot be proved is uncertain, probably unreal.
3. Scientific knowledge is certain and is the standard of truth; matters of faith are uncertain.
4. Nobody knows what is beyond death, or whether there is anything beyond death.

5. The visible and tangible is the standard of reality. The less visible, the less real.
6. The big things are the great things. Because man is so small in relation to this big universe he is also little.
7. I cannot help being what I am and how I am.
8. Freedom is independence. Therefore any kind of dependence is in opposition to freedom.
9. Justice is equality, and therefore any kind of inequality is the negation of justice.
10. Every department of human life and civilization exists in its own rights. To put religion in the first place is a form of arrogance and intolerance.
11. Man is free to have or not to have a relation to what religion calls God.
12. Freedom is exclusive of "must." Where man must he is not free.
13. Many are more than one, therefore the things of the many are more than those of one.
14. There are laws of destiny which determine everything.
15. Religion has its rights, if it has any, within the framework of civilized life. It is, at best, an expression of the best of human nature.
16. True humanity is measured by tolerance; tolerance however is the attitude which grants to one's opponent the same measure of truth as one claims for one's own.

Dr. Brunner has rendered a valuable service in thus setting down the tacit assumptions of much contemporary thinking. We recognize here the mental climate within which the church must perform its essential, yet difficult task of evangelism. It is the very plausibility of such axioms which makes it hard for many to push beyond them.

Missions on Okinawa

Opening up of battle-scarred Okinawa island as a united Protestant missionary project was unanimously approved at a meeting of the recently-formed Okinawa committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America.

Action of the committee was described by Conference spokesmen as a major step toward fulfilling the desire of many Christian leaders both in the United States and overseas to conduct Protestant foreign mission activities on an interdenominational basis rather than along traditional denominational lines.

Tentative plans call for the sending of a small staff of Christian missionaries and workers to Okinawa to serve as Protestants with no specific denominational label. Later, it is hoped, a school and hospital will be established.

The present governor of Okinawa, Shikiya Koshin, as well as other leading Okinawans, have expressed the need for mission work on the island, Mr. Hopkins declared. Describing the native peoples of Okinawa as "refined and cultured" with a tradition going back to the 16th century, he pointed out that the islanders were "originally animistic in their religious beliefs."

Christianity and Crisis

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"Buddhism was introduced into the island by the Japanese in about the fourteenth century, and Shintoism was imported in the seventeenth century, but seems to have had little impact upon the people even after annexation to the Japanese empire," he said.

"The dwindling of the native cult, the long lapse with little contact from the centers of Buddhism, and the necessity of an outward conformity to the tenets of Shintoism have produced a religious neutrality and apathy in the island that is probably unequalled in any other place in the world."

Commenting on the complete destruction of Okinawa's cities, Mr. Hopkins described the island as the "least provided for and the most needy" of any country occupied by the United States.

Niemöllers Thank Americans For Good Will

A message of thanks to American Christians for their "hearty welcome and good will" was released by Pastor Martin Niemöller and Mrs. Niemöller. The message said:

"Upon our arrival in the United States and ever since, we have been welcomed by thousands of fellow Christians wherever we have gone. Moreover, we have come

to know that this hearty welcome has been due to the surprising fact that in all those places Christian brethren and sisters have gone on praying for us as for other persecuted people in Germany and Central Europe through all this long time of hardship and suffering. This experience has given us a new evidence of the real and deep-rooted unity of the ecumenical Church of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

"Thus, we take this opportunity to thank God for His unspeakable gift and at the same time to thank the Christian people of America for this invaluable spiritual help—this spiritual help has become overflowing in every sort of succor which Christian brotherhood has granted to the needy and sorrow-stricken nations of Europe, including our own German people.

"Your Churches, by their practical brotherhood, have become a great blessing to us and you have helped us in the hour of need by sending food, clothing, and medical supplies. In this way, you have helped in saving lives, and have testified to the spirit of Christian brotherhood and reconciliation.

"May this blessing be brought back to you, your nation and your country, through the grace of God Who gave His Son, Jesus Christ, and by His sacrifice restored amongst men the spirit of brotherhood and charity and laid the foundations of genuine and lasting peace."—E.P.S. Geneva

Welcome Enemy

It is a unique event when a former German commander receives a cordial welcome in the very city which he has commanded during the years of occupation. This happened to Dr. Reinhold von Thadden, Chairman of the Student Christian Movement of Germany, who represents the foreign office of the German Evangelical Church at the headquarters of the World Council of Churches. During the war Dr. von Thadden was the military commander of the city of Louvain in Belgium. On the occasion of his recent visit to German prisoners of war in Belgium a dinner was organized in Louvain by Dr. Bruynoghe, professor of the University of Louvain, who was Burgomaster of the city during the war. The dinner was attended by the Rector Magnificus Monseigneur van Waeyenbergh, Apostolical Protonotary, and by the Chief of Police.

Various speakers expressed their gratitude to Dr. von Thadden for his Christian attitude during the years of occupation. It was especially stressed that it was thanks to the persistent efforts of Dr. von Thadden that Rector Mgr. van Waeyenbergh who had been imprisoned by the Nazis could be liberated, and that the hostages from Brussels imprisoned in Louvain were not executed, in spite of a definite order from the military governor, S.S. General Jungklaus.—E.P.S. Geneva

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